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Presentation Transcript
Jesus and the Days of Unleavened Bread
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This is part of a series called *Jesus and the Holy Days*. The specific title today is *Jesus and the Days of Unleavened Bread*.

Good afternoon everyone. Welcome to the Last Day of Unleavened Bread. We're going through a series about the biblical holy days and showing that Jesus is connected, in a New Testament way, to all of them. Why would that be important? Well, most people think the biblical holy days are actually Jewish holy days, not realizing that the New Testament church observed them. If we hope to help others understand about the holy days and the truth that they show us, then we have to show relevance to Christianity. Sometimes, however, even if they know that they're New Testament days, they still don't see the relevance, because they believe the church has the right to make changes in the religion that Jesus brought. So let's address that issue first.

Does the church have the right to change the religion – the faith and practice – that Jesus Christ brought to the earth? Let's look in Mark 7, and verse 1. It says:

Mark 7:1 – *But when the Pharisees gathered to Him with some of the scribes, who had come from Jerusalem, they saw that some of His disciples ate with hands that were defiled – according to their way of thinking – that is, unwashed, for the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands – holding to the tradition of the elders – which is something different from the written law of the Old Testament. And when they come to the market place, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many others traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots, and copper vessels and dining couches – none of which is in the Bible. And the Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, “Why do your disciples not wash according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with unwashed hands?” And He said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, hypocrites”* Whoa! He's laying it on them! They're doing something He doesn't like. *“As it is written, ‘These people honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.’ In vain do they worship Me”* – that means, in *futility* do they worship Me – *“teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”* Following the commandments of men, while trying to worship God, is a vain exercise. All the energy you put into that does *nothing!* Nothing good. *You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.*

That's what He was upset about. That's why they got called *hypocrites*. Jesus did not like their men-devised traditions. He liked the Law and the Prophets.

So that's pretty clear, isn't it? The early disciples heard Jesus say these words and they *got it*. And I'm going to read a scripture I read last time – just because it's one of the core scriptures on this topic. It's in Jude :3 – beginning there, where Jude says:

Jude :3 – *Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write, appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once, for all, delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed, who, long ago, were designated for this condemnation – ungodly people – who perverted the grace of our God into sensuality and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. The word *sensuality* there is a reference to just taking it out of the spiritual realm and making it into something physical.*

So when did Jude write this letter? Most of the commentators think it was written between 60 and 80 AD. That would be 30-50 years after Christ died – toward the end of the New Testament era. And who were these people that he talked about – *ungodly people who pervert the grace of our Lord?* Where did they go?

You know, while the twelve apostles were alive, they didn't make too much headway. But after they were gone, the church changed drastically and rapidly. And in a hundred years, it looked nothing like it looked before, except the name – even that's changed now. The original doctrine of Jesus was watered down. It was kicked to the curb. It was forgotten. We explained the motives last time in the presentation on *Jesus and the Passover of Moses*. So if you want to go back and see that, you can.

Let's look at another scripture in Titus 1:9.

Titus 1:9 – *He must hold firm – he's talking to people who are to be in the ministry – hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine, and also be able to rebuke those who contradict it.*

So here we read a warning for those people who are dealing with others and for us today. There is a thing in the Bible called *sound doctrine*. There is only one way. It's in the Bible. It was delivered to the church by Jesus. And there is a way to know what it is. You cannot prove “anything” from the Bible. You can only prove “anything” from the Bible if you want to add a lot to it, or take away a lot from it, or gloss over things, or just get specific about some parts and ignore the rest. If you take the whole Bible together, it puts forth a coherent, consistent message.

Let's look at one more – 2 Timothy 4:3.

2 Timothy 4:3 – *For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching. Why not? But having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth, and wander off into*

myths – made-up stories. That’s what the word means. So the reason this happens is because people accumulate to themselves teachers that they like to listen to. And it’s safe stuff that kind of fits in with what they think already or that they like.

We look at this bewildering array of beliefs in Christianity and conclude, “It’s all good,” but that really isn’t completely true. People say, “There’s no way to understand what the Bible really says,” but maybe, according to the Bible, that’s because people haven’t actually studied it with an open mind to see what *it* actually says, and have gone off with a version of it that seems to set well with them – maybe because their friends at church do the same – you know, the club mentality – or because it’s what we’ve always known – you know, you’ve got to stay with the family – or because it’s the cool thing, or what they learned in seminary, or denominational teaching, or for most people, probably, because it’s easy. Modern-day Christianity has been made easy, in the hope of gaining more people. That was the motive in the beginning. The more people that we can influence to read the word of God, then, among ourselves, the better chance they have of connecting with the truth of God and with God Himself at a deeper level – to get away from the ideas that other people have put forth.

So our topic is *Jesus and the Days of Unleavened Bread*. And that’s because of everything we just read. We believe that the New Testament church is the model for the religion Jesus brought. So that’s why we’re here today observing this Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Let’s look at the Days of Unleavened Bread in the Old Testament. Let’s look at Leviticus, chapter 23.

Leviticus 23:1 – *The Lord spoke to Moses saying, “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘These are the appointed feasts of the LORD that you shall proclaim as holy convocations. They are My appointed feasts.’”*

So, when God brought Israel out of Egypt, He gave them several festivals that they should observe – seven of them. The first one He mentions is called the *Sabbath*.

V -3 – *“Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day is the Sabbath of solemn rest – a holy convocation. You shall do no work. It is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwelling places.”* So that’s the weekly Sabbath.

Now, do you know how long it was from when Adam and Eve lived until Moses? It was about 2,500 years. So through all that time, the Sabbath was still in effect – up until Moses. And it still is here. It was a memorial of creation.

V-4 – *“These are the appointed feasts of the LORD – the holy convocations which you shall proclaim at the appointed time for them. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight....”* On God’s sacred calendar – the holy day calendar – the day begins the night before at sundown and the night time portion is the first part of that day.

And as it comes around to the end of the day, it ends at sundown during the daylight. So the night begins in the evening.

V-5 – “*In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight is the LORD’s Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD.*” So a day later, the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins – the first day after the Passover. “*For seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work, but you shall present a food offered to the LORD for seven days. On the seventh day is a holy convocation. You shall do no ordinary work.*”

So you’re probably thinking about matzos and *saders* and all the things that the Jews do – who also read this verse. We’re going to talk about that in a minute. So a week long festival following the ceremony of Passover. Passover was *not* a holy day. It was day on which a ceremony took place. The First Day of Unleavened Bread is a holy day and so is the Last, however. So we’re getting together to have a holy convocation on the last day of this festival. And we have eaten unleavened bread all through this week, because we’re not to eat leavened bread. And I’m going to prove it to you out of the New Testament.

So, why did they do that back then? What was the reasoning? Why did God tell them not to eat leavened bread for seven days? Well, Exodus 12, verse 15:

Exodus 12:15 – *Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leavening out of your houses. For, if anyone eats what is leavened from the first day to the seventh, that person shall be cut off from Israel. On first day you shall have a holy assembly and on seventh day, a holy assembly. No work shall be done on those days, but what everyone needs to eat, that alone may be prepared by you.* So on these festival days, you can fix fancy food – whereas on the weekly Sabbath, you prepare it ahead of time, unless you’ve got a microwave. Right? It’s easy. Just kidding about that.

V-17 – *You shall observe the feast of unleavened bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt.* Remember how the firstborn of Egypt died on Passover? God came through and, if blood wasn’t on the lintels of their doors, the firstborn in that house died. And then the next day, what did they do? They fled for their lives. *Therefore, you shall observe this day throughout your generations as a statute forever.*

So, that festival of Unleavened Bread pictured the time when they left Egypt. It said that they had to eat unleavened bread because they didn’t have time to let bread rise. They had to get out quickly.

Deuteronomy 16:3. This is talking about what they had to do.

Deuteronomy 16:3 – *You shall not eat leavened bread with it. Seven days you shall eat with unleavened bread – the bread of affliction – for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste.* It was a hard trip. *All the days of your life you may remember the day when you*

came out of the land of Egypt. So that's a pretty clear picture of why they did that, isn't it? They were held in bondage for 430 years, and then on a single night – 430 years to the *day*, it said – they went out of Egypt – saved out of Egypt, swiftly, by a mighty miracle. What are the chances of them being set free by the Egyptians? Zero to none. Their whole economy revolved around slave labor. And it happened so fast that they didn't even have time to let the yeast rise in their bread. They had to get out! So this bread of affliction – unleavened and eaten in haste – was a reminder, annually, of God's great power to save them from slavery in Egypt.

Now, if you have a modern translation Bible, it lays out the weekly Sabbath, and the Passover and Unleavened Bread all as one thing, and then it comes to something called the Feast of Firstfruits, I believe they call it. But I want you to notice something about this. People that don't keep these days don't understand how it works. So, those of us who do keep it know more than a lot of Bible scholars about what this all is talking about. We're experts in it, because we've done it all our lives.

The wave sheaf offering – Leviticus 23:9.

Leviticus 23:9 – *And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘When you come into the land that I give you and reap its harvest, you shall bring the sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, so that you may be accepted.’”* When? *“On the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.”* Which Sabbath? Well, if you read this in context, the first previous Sabbath mentioned would be the Sabbath *during* Unleavened Bread. It's not a holy day. It's just the Sabbath. So, traditionally, on the weekly Sabbath during Unleavened Bread, after sundown – that would be Saturday night – this Passover sheaf – and I'm reading this now out of Edersheim – *The Temple, Its Ministry and Services As They Were at the Time of Jesus* – there's a title for you, isn't it?

This Passover sheaf, or omer, was to be accompanied by a burnt offering of a he-lamb without blemish of the first year – so that kind of tells us what this sheaf pictures – with its appropriate meat and drink offering. And after it has been brought, but not till then, fresh barley might be used and sold in the land. Now this Passover sheaf was reaped in public in the evening before it was offered. And it was to witness this ceremony that the crowd gathered around the elders, who took care that all was done according to traditional ordinance.

This was something that was done in Jesus' time. If everything that was done in the Old Testament was a type, or a model, what does that picture? You'll notice that they call this a festival, but there's no holy day mentioned with it and it was done *during* Unleavened Bread. So this is a ceremony. It's not a separate festival. It's a ceremony that was held *during* Unleavened Bread. (The next one on the list is the Feast of Weeks – that we call, in the New Testament, Pentecost. So the firstfruits were waved and celebrated on Pentecost fifty days after this weekend. And we'll be talking about that in fifty days, won't we? Fifty days from yesterday.) So this was the sheaf of the very first ripe grain.

So what does all this have to do with Easter eggs, and crosses, and sunrise services, and Jesus Christ and all that? Absolutely nothing, because sunrise services, and Easter itself has nothing to do with Jesus Christ. All you have to do is go to your paper this weekend and then there will be an article in there explaining that. But these Old Testament, biblical things have *everything* to do with Christ! See, these are the things that have to do with Christ – not the stuff that we have today.

So let's look and see how the things of Moses' festival – especially Unleavened Bread and the wave sheaf – are all models of things to come. Let's go to 1 Corinthians 10. This is a review. Paul said to a Gentile church – right? – there were Jews in it, but there were also lots of Gentiles – we know that – so you can't say they were keeping the holy days because they were Jews:

1 Corinthians 10:1 - *For we want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea. Remember, they went through the Red Sea? What does he call that? He says: They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and the sea. And all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink. They drank it from the same spiritual Rock that followed them. And that Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them, God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things took place as examples – tupos – for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. What is tupos? Quote-unquote from Louw & Nida: a model or example which anticipates or precedes a later realization; an archetype; figure; foreshadow; symbol.*

So the Passover lamb foreshadowed Christ dying. The going through the Red Sea pictured the baptism of God's people – the church – because in the New Testament, it calls the church the Israel of God. So those ancient Israelites were a type of the New Testament church.

Now let's read some more. What does unleavened bread picture, then, in this model? Let's go to Matthew 13:33.

Matthew 13:33 – *Behold, Jesus told them another parable. The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until it was all leavened.* Oh, so leavening actually pictures the Kingdom of God! But they were putting leavening out. What's the deal?

Well, you see, leavening can stand for a couple of things in the Bible – not just one. So it wouldn't be right to tell you it just always has to do with sin. Jesus used leaven here to picture something good. But notice what He's talking about. He's using leaven to describe the pervasive nature of the Kingdom of God. It's going to fill the whole earth – just like leaven goes through a lump of dough. So that's the point you want to pick up from this – that leaven is pervasive in nature. And the Kingdom is going to grow like that. He said it's like a man that plants seed, and overnight, whether he sleeps or whether he's awake, somehow – he doesn't know how – it's just going to sprout – “all by itself” – is the exact term He used. He set in motion a system – Jim O'Brien talked about that in

his email this weekend – about how God has spiritual systems in place. He doesn't have to fret and stew over the Kingdom of God growing. It's just going to happen!

Matthew 16:6 – *Jesus said to them – to His disciples – “Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” And they began to discuss it among themselves, saying, “We brought no bread.”* I mean, they were just totally on the physical plane. But then, in verse 12, He said:

V-12 – *Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware the leaven of bread, but the teaching of the Sadducees and the Pharisees – a pervasive false doctrine that caused people to sin. So leavening, here, is used, again, as something pervasive. Everybody had been caught up in it in Jesus' time.*

And then we go to, perhaps, the most important scripture related to leaven for us in this context – 1 Corinthians 5:6 through 8. We read this last week, as well, because it's connected to Passover, too.

1 Corinthians 5:6-8 – *Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? So there it is – that pervasiveness. And what's he talking about? Well, he's talking about somebody in their congregation that did something that was really bad – even considered bad in the community – and they were being so “big-minded” they weren't doing anything about it. So he said, *Don't you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened – in Christ. For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us, therefore, celebrate the festival....* Did he really say that? Did he really say that to Gentile Christians? *Let us, therefore, celebrate the festival....* Which one do you think he was talking about? Was it Christmas? Was it Easter? Or was it the Festival of Unleavened Bread? *...not with the old leaven – the leaven of malice and evil – but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.* We worship God in spirit and in truth – not in false doctrine. So here, Paul passes on to the New Testament church what he directly received from Jesus Christ. How do I know that? Because that's what he said. He said in 1 Corinthians 11. We quoted it last week.*

So leaven is a type of sin – a model of sin. When they passed through the Red Sea and were baptized, then, for seven days – there is a period of time – not just a day, but a period of time – that pictures them living sin free – not because of anything good they did, but because they'd been washed clean – not in the waters of the Red Sea, but by the blood of Christ. See, it's all a model for what's going on now. They were free from the bondage of sin, like Israel was free from Egypt. And that's where we are today.

I see a sign on a little church every month when I go to Durango. It's in San Ysidro. I'm sure everybody out there in video-land knows where San Ysidro, New Mexico, is. Right? In San Ysidro, there's this little church there, and it has the words *New Life* on it. *New Life* is sort of a slogan for a movement that is in Christianity. It has a lot to do, I think, with addiction recovery – stuff like that. I think that's what it is, anyway. The Feast of Unleavened Bread is a week-long festival, designed by Jesus Christ, the Passover Lamb.

And it's for Christians, when we live without leavening in our bread for a week, to picture our new life in Jesus Christ – under His grace, washed free by His blood from the pervasive nature of sin. That's what it is. Most Christians today, hearing that statement, would say, "How could that possibly be?" But we just read it! *Let us, therefore, celebrate the festival, not with the leavened bread of malice and wickedness....*

So people say, "Well, it's really about living in spirit and truth." Is it? *Let us celebrate the festival.* How? Well, *in spirit and truth, not in malice and wickedness.* But it still says, "*Celebrate the festival,*" which is what I'm doing today. It doesn't make me great. I'm just doing it because it says to do it. And I know that it's there, so I'm obligated.

So it doesn't matter what kind of mental gymnastics we do, no matter what kind of rationalizations we use, no matter what kind of sleight-of-hand they turn out in the seminaries, no matter how difficult it is to face, there it is! Black and white. Plain as the noses on our faces. It's right there.

Now, what are we willing to do? "Well, if I did that, that would make me a Jew." No. According to this, it would make you a Christian. That's what Christians did in the New Testament. You just have to read the book! It's all there!

I want to show you something else. We've talked about the wave sheaf – earlier mentioned in Leviticus. If that's a model, what's it a model for? Well, we read in Edersheim that the wave sheaf was harvested on Saturday night. Is there a New Testament meaning for that? See, now I'm going to take some quick steps here, so you've got to watch, if you're going to catch it. In Daniel it says that the Messiah is going to be cut off in the midst of the week. That would mean that the Passover that year (the Passover – because the holy day calendar doesn't follow ours – can fall on different days of the week)... So He had to die in a year when the Passover fell on Wednesday. And that would mean that Wednesday night, as the sun set toward the First Day of Unleavened Bread, He was put in a tomb and the stone was rolled over it. We know that happened, but what we might not know is that it happened on a Wednesday night at sundown.

Now Jesus said that the *only* sign that He was going to give the scribes and the Pharisees that He was the Messiah – the *only* sign – was that He would be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. Now there have been all kinds of convoluted thinking, mental gymnastics, excuses, twisting of the word of God to try to make that less than three days and three nights, but that *is* what He said. And the words mean three days and three nights in the Greek. I know you're counting on your fingers right now from Good Friday afternoon, at 3 pm, to Sunday morning and you're not coming up with three days and three nights. Sorry, that was changed during that hundred-year blackout. That's when it all got changed. But, if you count from Wednesday, at sundown, three days and three nights – do it with me here – Wednesday night to Thursday night – one night – Thursday night to Friday night – two nights – Friday night to Saturday night – three days and three nights – not Sunday morning, but Saturday night. But the angel said, on Sunday morning, "He is risen." Right. They got there. He was already gone! That doesn't mean that He

rose at that time. It doesn't say that. It just says that they got there early in the morning and He was already gone.

So why did I bring that up? Well, when was the first ripe grain waved before God? Saturday night. And that's when He came out of the tomb. They call it the Festival of Firstfruits, but actually, it's the First of the Firstfruits, because there's another harvest coming in fifty days, called the harvest of firstfruits. He is the First of the firstfruits.

See, it all fits. Everything that the Israelites did was a picture of things to come. And Jesus, rather than telling us to keep Easter, told us to keep Passover. He did! He actually got all the disciples together, had a dinner with them the night before He was to die, and said, "Do this in remembrance of Me and what I did." Isn't that just the best thing that you've ever heard in your life? Isn't that just so amazing? I remember the first time I learned this. God's holidays, or holy days, are not scattered shotgun out on a calendar because of something supposed saints did or because the pagans dyed eggs or whatever. It's all part of a plan to explain what God is doing. Do you think that, if we kept those days, we'd know more about what He was doing in our lives? Well, I've done this since I was 18, and I can tell you that it does.

So I'm hearing a faint whisper in my ears. I'm hearing terms almost psychically: legalist, Judaizer. I'm hearing those terms come up. Find those words in the Bible. Go ahead. Find them in the Bible. Show me how you can judge me for what I do using those terms. Those words are *not* in the Bible. So how did they creep into your thinking? Well, they were concepts invented after the New Testament was written to keep people away from the truth – to scare people away from it. They had to keep people away from the law and from the holy days, because those things were associated with Judaism. And Judaism got people killed back then. It's always a good thing to *do* what the New Testament church did – *always* a good thing – to be united with our sister and brothers in the New Testament era in faith and practice – to be united with the apostle Paul and with Jesus Christ – to do as they did.

Okay, that's good. But why else would we do it? Would we do it to earn salvation? Well, we would if we were legalists, but, of course, we're not. Salvation is not the works of any man or woman, lest they should boast, we're told. The *only* way to attain salvation is to repent and to accept Jesus Christ's blood for our sins. We can keep the Sabbath until the cows come home and it won't gain us a thing salvation-wise. There's only *one* way to attain salvation – only *one* name by which men may be saved. But we do keep it to understand what Christ has for us and the meaning of these days. And when we align with the biblical festivals, we start to understand what Jesus has done *for* us and what He has *in store* for us, because the feasts of God show us His plan.

Why else would we do it? Well, we do it to show gratitude to God for what He's done for us. To obey God is not legalistic. It's a rational response to what Christ has done for us. Let's read that – Romans 6:19. Paul says to the Romans:

Romans 6:19 – *I'm speaking in human terms because of your natural limitation. I'm taking it way down to where you can understand it. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity, and to lawlessness – see, it's not good to be lawless – leading to more lawlessness – that's double bad – so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, leading to sanctification.* You know, all these people that talk about this cheap grace – all you've got to do is give your heart to the Lord – is not what it says. He died for us. He did. Now it's our turn to die for Him. That's the deal. It's our turn to become a bondsman to Jesus Christ – sold to do the will of God rather than the will of humans who might be in our lives as well – to do what God says, no matter what all others do. See, talking about the law of God, obeying it is *not* legalism. It can be done legalistically, but that's a whole different argument.

Let's keep the end goal in mind. Someday in the future, there's going to be an assembly of people standing before the throne of God, accepted, love and eternal. We saw that picture in Revelation last week. Remember that picture? That's a reality. The Bible describes these people as those who washed their robes in the blood of Christ – and a lot of people believe they have done that. But it also says that they were people who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.